

The Advent Review and Sabbath
Herald, vol. 78

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E. J. Waggoner

The word “wine,” as well as its equivalent in the Greek, is not specific. There are various kinds of wine, but nobody can tell the nature of the article referred to by the unqualified word “wine;” some qualifying word must be connected with it, in order for us to know whether the article referred to is good or bad, fermented or unfermented, unless there is something else in the text that indicates it, as, for instance, the effect that it produces. For, just as a tree is known by its fruit, so wine is known by the consequences of drinking it.*ARSH December 24, 1901, page 831.1*

There is good water and bad water-water that is pure, and water that is stale and nauseous. Fresh water is good, but the same water that is good to-day will be unfit to drink if allowed to stand a few days. It is water, however, even after it has stood till it is teeming with disease germs; and its name, “water,” unqualified, does not convey any idea as to its character.*ARSH December 24, 1901, page 831.2*

Just so it is with wine. When it is first pressed from the grapes it is pure, refreshing and wholesome; but after It has stood exposed to the air for a season it undergoes fermentation, or decay, and is then poisonous. It is still wine, however, although no longer good wine; and the term “wine,” if unqualified, does not tell us anything as to which kind it is.*ARSH December 24, 1901, page 831.3*

That the fresh, pure, unfermented juice of the grape is really wine, is seen from the following portions of Scripture: “As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it; so will I do for My servants’ sakes, that I may not destroy them

all.” *Isaiah 65:8*. Here we see that not only the freshly expressed juice of the grape, but even the juice while it is yet in the cluster in the vine, is real wine. *ARSH December 24, 1901, page 831.4*

Again, in *Genesis 40:9-11* we read in the dream of Pharaoh's butler: “In my dream, behold a vine was before me; and in the vine were three branches; and it was as though it budded, and her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes; and Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand.” *ARSH December 24, 1901, page 831.5*

Thus we see that not only is the wine found in the cluster of ripe grapes, but it is such wine as in ancient time was thought to be a drink fit for a king; for Pharaoh's butler dreamed of what he had been used to doing. *ARSH December 24, 1901, page 831.6*

Now as to the wine that Jesus made for the guests at the marriage feast in Cana. It is true that the word has no qualifying adjective in the narrative of that event; but the circumstances unmistakably indicate its character. *ARSH December 24, 1901, page 831.7*

In the first place, let us remember that only good things come from the hand of the Lord. He sends blessing, not a curse; and we have just read that the blessing is in the wine that is found in the cluster. On the other hand, we are told that they who drink the wine “when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright,” that is, when it is fermented, have woe, sorrow, contentions, and wounds without cause, and that such wine at the last “biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.” *Proverbs 23:29-32*. It takes away a man's senses, so that he is like one “that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of the mast.” *Verse 34*. Can anybody charge the Lord with preparing such a drink for men? Who that reverences the Saviour can for a moment entertain the thought that He would deliberately manufacture, and order to be given to the guests at a marriage feast, such wine as would tend to take away their senses, inflame all their passions, and set them in an uproar, and possibly cause them to fight? *ARSH December 24, 1901, page 831.8*

Still further: If it were true that on this occasion Jesus made

fermented wine, it would furnish a most unnatural exception to God's work; for never in nature has such a thing as fermented wine been known. On the contrary, God takes the utmost pains to prevent the wine that He makes from fermenting. Let us study the case for a moment.*ARSH December 24, 1901, page 831.9*

Examine a cluster of grapes. See how firm the skin is upon each grape, and how closely it is fastened to the stem. The skin of the grape, like that of other fruits, is its protection against decay or fermentation. As long as the skin remains unbroken, fermentation cannot possibly take place. Each grape is, in fact, a small bottle of unfermented wine, hermetically sealed so as to preserve it from fermentation.*ARSH December 24, 1901, page 831.10*

While the grapes are in that condition they are good to eat-delicious and wholesome. But let us take another cluster. On this one there are some grapes that have been braised, so that the skin is broken, and some have been half-way pulled off the stem. What is their condition?-They have begun to decay; a little mould is seen in each wounded grape, and no one would eat them, not even the drinker of fermented wine, unless he had already drunk so much of it as to lose his wits. Yet that which has begun on those wounded grapes is exactly what must take place in the expressed juice, in order that it may become fermented wine. You say the grapes that have been broken are rotten. So they are, or at least they are beginning to rot, and nobody likes to eat rotten grapes; yet the very same people who reject the decayed grapes, will eagerly drink the grape juice when it has rotted still more. How inconsistent! If the grape is unhealthful when it is diseased because of a wound, how can it be healthful when the disease has progressed so far that it has produced death? The fresh juice is life-producing; the fermented juice produces death.*ARSH December 24, 1901, page 831.11*

Can you not now see clearly that the first state of wine, as the Lord makes it, is always unfermented? And not only so, but that unless man interferes, and changes the Lord's plan for the grape, the wine will always remain unfermented? God never makes fermented wine; that is always a product of the curse. Wine must stand some little time exposed to the air, before it becomes fermented wine.*ARSH December 24, 1901, page 831.12*

Now we have the question answered as to the kind of wine that Jesus prepared for the wedding guests. Just as the sun ripens the sap that is stored up in the cluster, so Christ, the Light of the world, the Sun of righteousness, made the same change in the water that was in the waterpots; and it would be as forced and absurd to suppose that it was fermented, as to expect to find fermented wine in the grape cluster. The wine was drawn out and at once carried to the governor of the feast. If any of it was left over, and allowed to stand exposed to the air for a time, it would undoubtedly ferment, just the same as any other wine that the Lord makes.*ARSH December 24, 1901, page 831.13*

Such wine as Jesus made on that wedding day in Cana is good enough to be drunk in heaven, and will be furnished to all the guests at "the marriage supper of the Lamb." When Jesus passed the cup to His disciples on the night of the Passover,-a time when no leaven or ferment could be found in any Jewish house,-He said, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."*Matthew 26:29.ARSH December 24, 1901, page 831.14*

It is hardly possible that there is anybody so irreverent as to suggest that the wine ("the fruit of the vine," mark you) on that occasion will be such as could by any possibility produce intoxication, that is, wine which is of a poisonous nature. E. J. WAGGONER.

